

2019

Time, action, wear, memory

Andrew John Zandt
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Time, action, wear, memory

by

Andrew J. Zandt

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major: Integrated Visual Arts

Program of Study Committee:
April Katz, Major Professor
Olivia Valentine
Firat Erdim

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2019

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ABSTRACT

Artists are hackers. The essence of hacking is to deviate from an established way of thinking or doing something. To be an artist requires one to embrace breaking the rules, starting with quick and inelegant solutions to solve complex problems, and making rough and heavy cuts into ineffective ideas.

This thesis adapts four definitions of hacking to position it as a valid and productive method for making artwork. It serves as documentation of the author's path in understanding his working process as an artist. Along the way, he examines the work of historic and contemporary artists who have engaged hacking as part of their practice, including Gordon Matta-Clark, Dieter Roth, Phyllida Barlow, Rob Swainston, Daniel Brice, and Dirk De Bruycker.

The artworks in the accompanying thesis exhibition are the results of the hacking process. The prints begin as monotypes and monoprints, which yield unique results for each image. The artist tears the prints after the first printed layer. They are then shuffled, reassembled, reprinted, and shuffled again before being sewn together.

Time, Action, Wear, Memory embodies the unpredictability of not knowing or being able to expect exactly what will result when the work begins. The uncertainty is an important stimulus for making. It requires the maker to set up the conditions for something to happen, but it does not dictate the final output. It is an ongoing process of make, observe, respond, make, observe, respond.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO HACKING

Artistic Background

On a sweltering day in August of 2011, I finished loading the last boxes into the moving truck and hopped in the cab with my father and stepmother. We were about to start a fifteen-hour drive from Minneapolis, where I had graduated a few months before from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Design in Architecture, to New Brunswick, New Jersey. I would be joining my partner, Emily, who was about to start graduate school at Rutgers University. I knew no one, other than Emily, and had no job waiting for me, but I was buoyed by the excitement of moving to a new region of the country, especially one where some of the world's greatest resources for art and design were only a train-ride away in New York City.

Within a few weeks, I began a job in the marketing and communications department of an architecture firm in midtown Manhattan. I quickly found that professional practice in architecture lacked the physical making that I loved so much in architecture school. This was exasperated by my job description as a Marketing Assistant, which required me to spend my days in front of a computer screen assembling brochures knowing that the materials would end up in the trash after the prospective client fulfilled his curiosity. When I was not moving text and images around a digital page, I was researching, writing, curating, and posting content to three social media platforms and updating the firm's online profiles. I understood the value in the work for the firm, but for myself it felt far away from the hands-on environment I admired in school. I knew that I needed a change.

It was at this time that I seriously considered a career as an artist. I took studio art courses as an undergraduate, completing an art minor, and I wanted to get back into a regular

studio practice. With the encouragement of a co-worker who had recently completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts and who also invited me to figure drawing sessions at a small artists' collective in Brooklyn, I began to consider a Master of Fine Arts degree. This consideration was probably influenced by my job at the architecture firm as well. The firm's founding partners had completed homes and studios spaces for artists such as Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, Brice Marden, Donald Sultan, and Ross Bleckner. I became well-acquainted with the physical and conceptual aspects of these projects as I assembled marketing materials highlighting the firm's work for these high-profile artists—one of the more enjoyable moments of that job.

I had also started designing and developing websites for clients on the side. While this was a form of relief from my day job because I had more autonomy over the work, I felt the strain from being stationary at one desk for eight hours only to come home and sit at another desk, in front of another screen, for at least four more hours. I also struggled with my relationship to a millennial identity, characterized as a city dwelling, tech-savvy entrepreneur. On one hand, I wanted to fit that idea, and I worked towards it by moonlighting as a web designer. On the other hand, I was far too disconnected from physical labor and no amount of key stroking and mouse clicking would ever satisfy my hands.

It would be another three years, moves to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and several post-baccalaureate courses before I moved yet again to start a Master of Fine Arts program at Iowa State University. Through all of this I was driven by the same optimism that carried me to the east coast, and this time I had a clearer goal in mind.

Definitions of Hacking

My grandfather is a hacker, but not in the way one usually thinks of the word hacker today. One of my favorite stories about him is that one day he decided he was tired of pushing his lawn mower, so he created a mounting system for his motorcycle that treated the lawn mower as a sidecar. This was before I was born, but my mother has distinct memories of sitting in the living room of her in-laws watching my grandfather zip back-and-forth across his lawn.

If one Googles “hacking,” a lot of results appear related to digital technologies and wrongdoing. I am interested in a different type of hacking. This kind of hacking relates to the physical making that my grandfather did and aligns with my practice as an artist. It involves tangible materials.

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary, the word hacking has many meanings.¹ I have adapted four of those definitions to position hacking as a valid and productive method for making artwork. I will also discuss the work of several contemporary artists who engage with hacking as part of their practice.

The first definition of hacking is to make rough and heavy cuts. Gordon Matta-Clark’s (1943–1978) artwork, which included cuts through entire buildings, drew attention to a failure of contemporary architecture and urban planning to address the needs and everyday realities of inhabitants. Although my artwork is smaller in scale, I have also been interested in examining the materials of our built environment by challenging their structural integrity and intended uses. This process raises questions such as: can perforated walls remind us of the limitations and vulnerabilities of our houses and workplaces? Manipulating materials to

¹ *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (2017), s.v. “hacking.”

deny their original functions allows them to become something new, just as Matta-Clark's heavy cuts into buildings transformed them from dwellings into light sculptures.

The second definition of hacking is to gain unauthorized access. I like to think about this as purposely ignoring intentions and breaking the rules. Although printmaking is often associated with a number of identical images on paper, I have parted with the tradition of editioning in favor of one-offs, or monoprints. Rather than using a single matrix to create an impression, I coordinate many matrices and materials to build the print.

This accumulation of layers sometimes involves traditional wood, metal, and stone matrices, and it also includes found materials. For example, in the fall of 2016 I used discarded scraps of laser-cut wood and cardboard to develop a variety of backgrounds for a series of large woodcut monoprints. As I will explain, Dieter Roth (1930–1998) was especially good at breaking the rules of printmaking. For example, he made several series of prints using food instead of ink.

The third definition of hacking is to develop quick and inelegant solutions. For me, this is about exploring and acting on ideas without worrying if those ideas are going to succeed or fail. In the fall of 2017, I needed a large canvas, but I knew it would not be actual canvas because the material was too heavy for what I planned to do, too expensive, and too connected to traditional painting. Instead, I tried inexpensive paper and plastic drop cloths that I purchased from a home-improvement store.

The drop cloths were not a perfect solution. The paper layer unexpectedly peeled off as I was painting, but this led to new discoveries. The areas where the paper peeled away let light through the plastic, encouraging me to consider the larger role light plays in my artwork. The artist Phyllida Barlow (born 1944) embraces the unexpected in her studio

practice. She says that works may change, get “hacked about,” broken, and even semi-destroyed, and all of this sets off new processes and directions to explore.²

The fourth definition of hacking is a strategy or technique for managing one’s time or activities more efficiently. Do not be fooled by the inclusion of the word efficient; hacking as a method for making art can sometimes seem very disorganized. For me, this definition is less about efficiency than it is about coming to terms with my creative process and managing my time in the studio so that it yields meaningful results.

I am recognizing that there is no one right way to approach creative practice. Although some artists may have more efficient processes, hacking is my way of achieving maximum productivity. Therefore, I propose an alternative fourth definition: hacking is a strategy or technique for gaining freedom from an established way of doing and thinking about something.

² Elizabeth Fisher, “Unidentified Foreign Objects,” in Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2013), 100.

CHAPTER 2. MAKE ROUGH AND HEAVY CUTS

Being Organized

Every few months, my mother asks when I plan to come to her house and relieve her of the boxes of baseball, football, and basketball cards that are currently occupying her basement shelves. There are literally thousands of cards ranging from the 1980s through the early 2000s, and the collection represents one of my many childhood obsessions of buying sports memorabilia and trading it with friends. Given that there are so many cards, my answer to my mother's question is usually the same, "Whenever I have an apartment or house with enough space to store them, Mom!"

Though it has been over fifteen years since I last purchased a pack of cards, or really spent any time with my collection, I still remember what I have, and I could tell the curious person which box holds which types of cards. I was not only obsessed with collecting the cards, but I was also fixated on organizing them. My method for organization consisted of four categories: value, brand, sport, and year. Whenever I purchased new cards or received some in a trade, I immediately referenced my official *Beckett Price Guide* to check if I had a card of value. For any cards worth more than five dollars, I added them to my "Valuable Card List" and promptly placed them in a plastic sleeve followed by a clear, rigid case. I would then exhibit the valuable cards in a wood box that I built specifically for that purpose. I still cared for the cards that did not meet the five-dollar value qualification. In that case, it would not receive a plastic sleeve, but I placed it according to brand, sport, and year in an appropriately labeled cardboard box.

The urge to organize has grown stronger since childhood. In my second semester of graduate school, I created a series of artworks on panels of drywall using knives, gouges,

drill bits, nails, staples, and paint (Figures 2.11 and 2.12). I was interested in the physical actions that I employed to create each mark just as much as its visual characteristics, and there seemed to be an infinite number of techniques to which I could subject the wallboard. I knew that I needed a way to keep track of the possibilities, so I relied on the organizational impulse I honed through my childhood hobby. I made a list of 64 actions that I could engage while working on my drywall series (Table 2.1).

I learned of Richard Serra's (born 1938) *Verblast* soon after I created my list. In 1967, Serra compiled a hand-written, two-page list of the infinitives of 84 verbs such as to roll, to crease, and to fold. According to the Museum of Modern Art, "Serra described the list as a series of 'actions to relate to oneself, material, place, and process,' and employed it as a kind of guide for his subsequent practice in multiple mediums."³ As I read Serra's list and considered his statement, I realized why he might have used the words "oneself, material, place, and process." These are four criteria that all artists must address when they make artwork.

When I developed the works on drywall, I considered the role of each word: the cutting tools were an extension of my body (oneself); the drywall was my material; my studio was the place, which is significant as a "safe" place to execute ideas; and the list of actions were a map for my process. For my card collection, the categories of value, sport, brand, and year helped me understand how to deal with new acquisitions. For my artwork, the categories of oneself, material, place, and process help me understand what I make, how I make it, and they structure the unexpected questions that inevitably arise while I work.

³ Samantha Friedman, "To Collect," in *Inside/Out* (blog), https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2011/10/20/to-collect, last updated October 20, 2011 (accessed April 3, 2019).

Table 2.1. Drywall Verb List.

adhere	glue	rupture
attach	gouge	scar
break	hack	score
build	join	scratch
burst	lacerate	separate
carve	layer	sever
claw	mangle	sharpen
cleave	mark	shatter
crack	nail	shove
cut	paste	shred
disintegrate	pick	slash
disrupt	pierce	slit
disturb	pry	split
divide	pull	spread
drag	puncture	staple
drill	reapply	strike
dull	reattach	sunder
extract	rend	tap
fracture	repeat	tear
fray	rip	wedge
gash	rive	wrest

Gordon Matta-Clark

Although Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978) is perhaps best known for his cuts through buildings in the 1970s, he has also worked with paper. In 1972, Matta-Clark hung *Walls Paper* as a part of a solo exhibition in an artist-run space at 112 Greene Street in New York City (Figure 2.1). The installation was made of long strips of newsprint that he had screen printed with manipulated images of partially demolished buildings in the Bronx and Lower-East Side.

Matta-Clark's source photographs for *Walls Paper* are close-ups of peeling and chipped paint, layers of old wallpaper, and crumbling plaster of the derelict buildings' interior walls. Because the source photos were grayscale, he assigned color to the images before screenprinting them onto newsprint. The coloring of the printed photographs is an important aspect of the piece; Matta-Clark was deliberate in his color manipulations and selected jarring and unattractive combinations, including prismatic blues with bright reds, acid greens with luminous yellows, and muddy monochromes.

In choosing these colors, the artist made reference to scenes from New York City's streets in the early 1970s.⁴ Despite connections to the grittiness of city streets, the color beautifies the images. In a description about the work, art historian Thomas Crow acknowledges the reference to the street and also identifies something more ephemeral: “[The work] registered a gritty streetscape while simultaneously conjuring some other, imagined space closer to reverie and dream.”⁵

⁴ His choice to print on newsprint is also significant in that printed newspaper is very much a part of the urban scene, first as reading material and then as detritus blowing in the wind and littering the streets.

⁵ Mark Godfrey, “Walls Paper,” in *Tate*, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/matta-clark-walls-paper-t14658>, last updated October 2010 (accessed September 15, 2018).

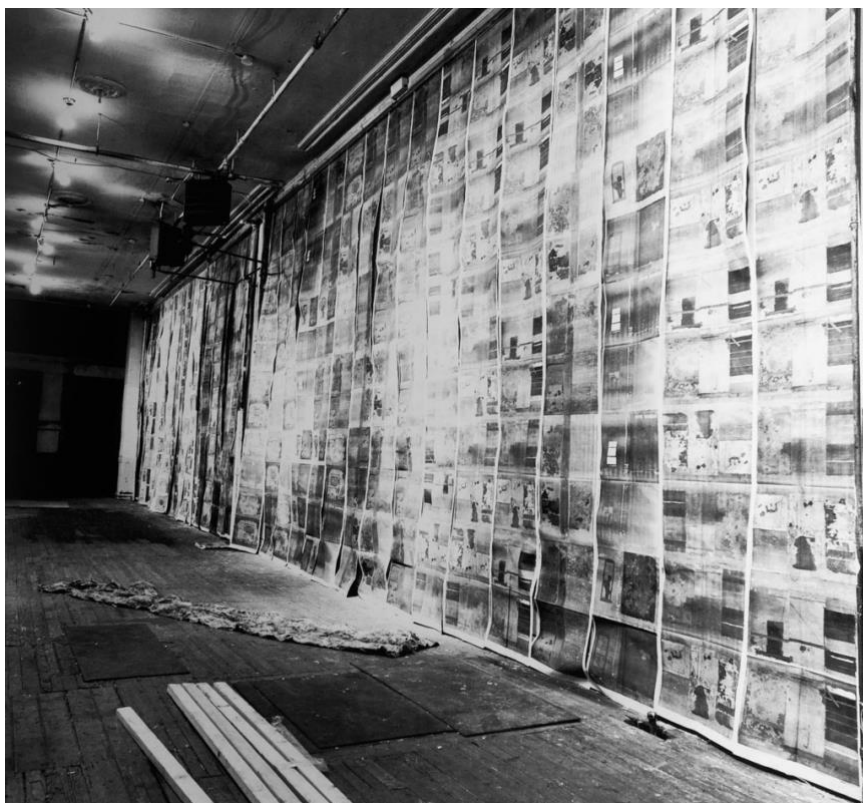


Figure 2.1. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Walls Paper* (view of original installation view at 112 Greene Street), 1972, multiple screenprints.

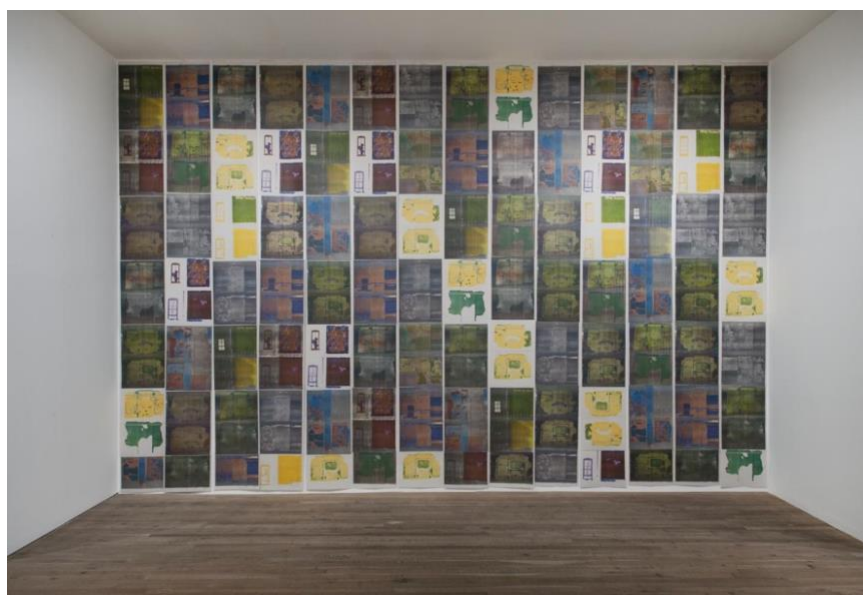


Figure 2.2 Gordon Matta-Clark, *Walls Paper* (installation view of replicated prints at the Tate Modern in London), 2015, 72 offset lithographs on newsprint paper.

After *Walls Paper*, from 1972 through 1978, Matta-Clark performed a series of building cuts where he dissected and removed sections of buildings, all of which was documented in film and photographs. One of these projects, completed in 1974 and titled *Splitting*, involved a single-family home that had been scheduled for demolition in Englewood, New Jersey (Figure 2.3). With *Splitting*, Matta-Clark began by making two parallel cuts through the floors, walls, and roof. He then elevated one half of the building using a jack to access the cinderblock foundation, which he beveled away from the cuts.⁶ When the house was lowered back onto the beveled foundation, a wedge of air and light split the two halves. The cut denied the structure's original function as a living space and instead became a sculpture for light. In effect, the domestic space became a large sundial (Figure 2.4).

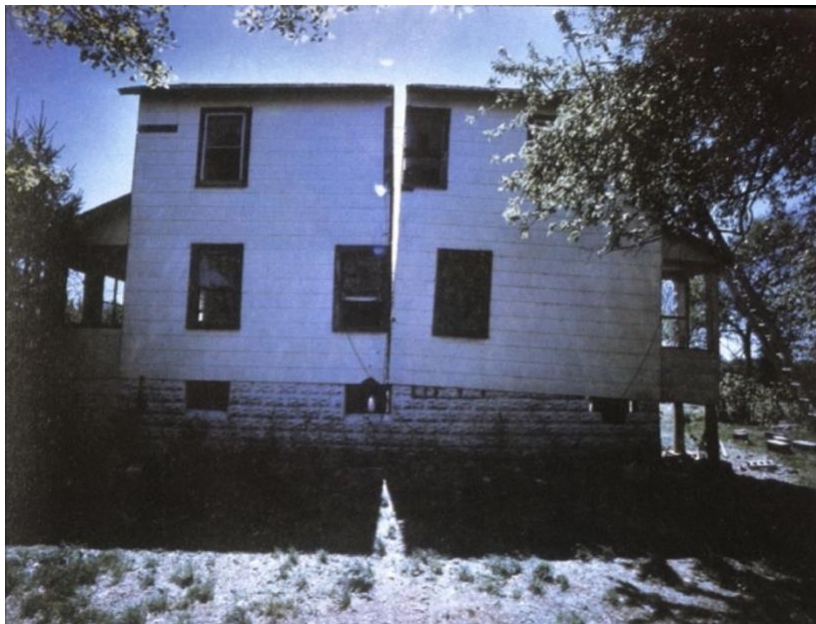


Figure 2.3. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974.

⁶ "Splitting," in *The Art Institute of Chicago*, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/187171/splitting>, last updated 2018 (accessed April 3, 2019).



Figure 2.4. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*, 1974, chromogenic prints mounted on board, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Matta-Clark went on to perform other building cuts at larger scales. In 1975, with an invitation from Parisian city officials for the ninth Paris Biennial, he completed *Conical Intersect* (Figure 2.5).⁷ By creating a periscope-like incision through a pair of seventeenth-century residential buildings slated for demolition, Matta-Clark created new views into and from the buildings, allowing light and air to enter the space that was previously devoid of

⁷ "Conical Intersect," in *National Gallery of Art*, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.139363.html> (accessed February 3, 2019).

both. This supported his desire to expose the oppression of enclosed urban environments.⁸ In his building cuts, Matta-Clark was also interested in breaking the limitations of a surface. As he discusses in an interview about his work, “I was thinking about surface as something which is too easily accepted as a limit. And I was also becoming very interested in how breaking through the surface creates repercussions in terms of what else is imposed upon by a cut. It was kind of the thin edge of what was being seen that interested me as much, if not more than, the views that were being created.”⁹



Figure 2.5. Gordon Matta-Clark, *Conical Intersect*, 1975.

⁸ In an interview about *Conical Intersect*, Matta-Clark mentions that the best reaction to his work came from a 70-year-old concierge who said, “Oh, I see the purpose for that hole—it is an experiment in bringing light and air into spaces that never had enough of either.” Donald Wall, “Gordon Matta-Clark’s Building Dissentions,” in *Gordon Matta-Clark*, Corinne Discerns, ed. (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2003), 183. First appeared in *Arts Magazine*, May 1976, 74–79.

⁹ Liza Bear, “Gordon Matta-Clark: Splitting the Humphrey Street Building,” in *Gordon Matta-Clark*, Corinne Discerns, ed. (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 2003), 165. First appeared in *Avalanche*, December 1974, 34–37.

Making My Own Cuts

Relief Printmaking

Of the printmaking processes that involve making incisions into a matrix, carving in relief is closest to the cuts that Matta-Clark made into buildings and, in a related series of work titled *Cut Drawings*, stacks of paper (Figure 2.6). My printmaking experience during the first semester of graduate school was exclusively using relief processes. At first, I was interested in focusing my woodcutting labor (which can be quite extensive, especially on large boards) on creating recognizable images that referenced my experiences working on a farm in Minnesota. By the end of the semester, however, I was less interested in objective imagery and became more curious about the process of making a relief print, the cuts themselves, and how the imagery might best express the physicality of those cuts.

Inspired in equal parts by Matta-Clark and Orit Hofshi's displays of large, wall-sized woodcuts on multiple planks of pine, such as her installation of *Crossing* (Figure 2.7), I started *Accumulation* (Figures 2.8–2.10). The artwork is comprised of ten unique woodcuts that each measure seventy-two inches tall by seven and one-quarter inches wide. As a whole, the installation is a field of color splotches that could be read as a heat map or a diagram indicating the intensity of an impending storm. Viewers have shared other interpretations, which varied from reptile skin to lichen on trees to sedimentary layers of rock.



Figure 2.6. Gordon Matta-Clark, untitled (cut drawing), 1975, cut paper, 22 x 30 x 2 in., Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.



Figure 2.7. Orit Hofshi, *Crossing*, 2017, spoon-printed woodcut on handmade paper, carved pine wood panels and ink, 10 x 32 ft.

The splotches are based on the patterns that emerged from a series of sanded paper studies I had completed shortly before beginning the woodcut. Each piece of paper went through various degrees of trauma via an electric sander, ranging from one to ten minutes or more, using sandpaper of 80 to 320-grit. I then scanned the paper studies and digitally enlarged them to fit the scale of the six-foot planks of wood.

I used a variety of chisels while creating this work, and each left a unique mark: U-shaped gouges produced wide and shallow cuts, while the trail of a V-gouge was narrow and deep. As I cut, loosely referencing the images of the sanded paper that I had transferred directly to the wood, I thought about the relationship between surface and void. What were the visual distinctions between the two? Could I manipulate and even confuse their boundaries through the prints?

The edges that I created were also important to me, just as they were for Matta-Clark. The relationship between surface and void came down to the thin edge that separated them. If the edge of a shape in my image was hard it would read as a clear boundary between surface and void. If the edge was soft it would yield an atmospheric effect, as if surface were dissolving into void or void forming into surface.

I loved the idea that I created something physical (the image) by taking something else away (the wood). In this case, I made an image on tangible sheets of paper by carving into a wood matrix using the reduction woodcut technique. This method allows the printmaker to use one board to create an entire, multiple-color image by first carving away material from any area that is intended to be white. These are the areas in which the surface of the woodcut will not touch the paper and no ink will be transferred. While not literally holes in the paper, these white areas are a type of void nonetheless. As the reduction carving

and printing process progresses, any areas that are cut away from the matrix will yield the colors of the preceding layer in the print. The voids are productive in that they became oculi for views into the layers underneath. They also emit light if the print, which is on thin, translucent paper, is placed in front of a window, as I did for my first installation of *Accumulation*.

At the time, *Accumulation* had also represented my most experimental use of color. In this regard, I was heavily influenced by Matta-Clark's *Walls Paper* installation. In general, most printmakers begin printing with the lightest ink colors and work toward the darkest, but I deviated from this routine by overprinting light colors onto dark colors. In the event that the prints became too dark too fast, I returned to lighter hues of green, orange, and violet that had been mixed with a substantial amount of opaque white ink so that they covered the previous layers.

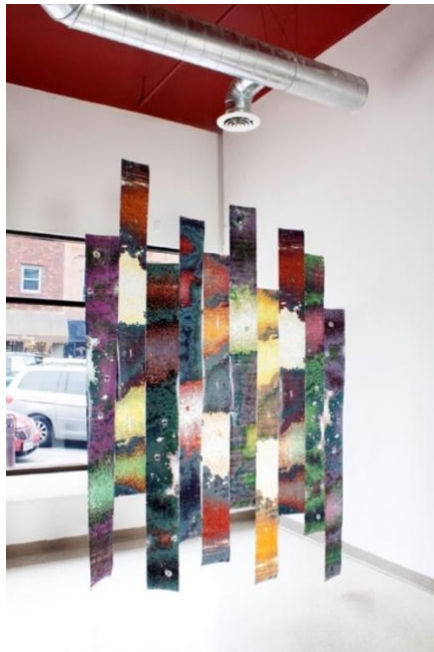


Figure 2.8. Andrew Zandt, *Accumulation*, 2016, reduction woodcut, each panel: 6 ft x 7.25 in., installed dimensions: 9 x 6 ft., installation at Design on Main Gallery, Ames, IA.



Figure 2.9. Andrew Zandt, *Accumulation* (detail).



Figure 2.10. Andrew Zandt, *Accumulation* (view with sunlight and cast shadows).

Most printmakers also mix colors prior to applying them to the matrices. Again, I digressed from this rule in the process of printing *Accumulation* by allowing some color mixing to happen as I inked the matrices. Without cleaning the ink residue left on the matrix or brayer from a previous run, I re-inked both and let the colors influence one another. I thought of this process as controlled contamination and found it an effective way to reduce the saturation of colors to prevent the whole piece from becoming too vibrant. This helped me reach the level of color balance that I observed in *Walls Paper* between heightened, dream-like colors and those that were reminiscent of sordid city streets.

Cutting Into Drywall

My work on drywall began by trying to understand what else a drawing could be beyond traditional approaches on paper. I wondered what kind of information or insights could be gained by removing materials from a prepared surface. The most successful work of this investigation was completed on a sheet of drywall measuring eight feet by four feet (Figures 2.11 and 2.12). The panel, which was mounted to a wood frame of two-by-fours, was covered with scrapes and cuts across its entire surface. These marks are condensed in some areas and sporadic in others. There are holes that meander from the lower left corner towards the board's center-right. They vary in size from pinholes to large openings that look like a complex network of lakes on a map that are connected by narrow streams.

When I began this work, I was at first interested in creating an image on the surface of the board by controlling the values yielded by the gray and brown layers of the drywall facing paper and the white of the board's gypsum core. I followed the shadows of an image that I projected onto the board and used a utility knife blade to scrape through the paper facing on the board. As I progressed with the scraping, I became more aggressive with my

cuts and experimented with different cutting tools beyond the razor, including gouges and chisels, a jigsaw, and an electric drill. I cut through the drywall, and the holes yielded another level of value depending on the amount of light that I allowed to illuminate the back of the board.

The more time I spent with the board, and the closer I physically was to it, I became more interested in its surface, especially in the variety of edge conditions of the cuts and holes. The edges embodied the characteristics of the tools that I used: as one might expect, a razor would leave a smooth edge and sharp angles, and a drill fitted with a broad cutting bit would leave a soft edge with a burr of fibers from the paper facing.

Undoubtedly, my concurrent research in Matta-Clark's building cuts influenced my fascination with the physical cuts in drywall. He was engaging the cut as an analytical tool to reach a new understanding of his materials and their potential. In a book about Matta-Clark's *Cut Drawings*, author Briony Fer writes, "In his drawings, as in his building cuts, Matta-Clark's aim was to reconfigure a new structure."¹⁰ I, too, am interested in drawing and prints as a structure, something that extends beyond the surface of the two-dimensional paper.

Paper can still be a part of the surface, but now I ask myself what else the paper can do. What happens if the paper is ripped, oiled, or waxed to change its surface quality and transparency? What if it is molded to change its form and to extend it into space?

¹⁰ Briony Fer, "The Beginning of Trees and the End," in Lucas Zwirner, *Gordon Matta-Clark: The Beginning of Trees and the End* (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2016), 17. Exhibition catalogue published on the occasion of the exhibition *Gordon Matta-Clark: Energy & Abstraction*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, September 9–October 24, 2015.



Figure 2.11. Andrew Zandt, *Lacerate*, 2017, drywall and wood, 8 x 4 ft.



Figure 2.12. Andrew Zandt, *Lacerate* (detail).

CHAPTER 3. BREAK THE RULES

The Rule Follower

I have been a rule follower my entire life. As a child, I rarely got in trouble, at least not at school. At home, it was a different story. I was not reprimanded for breaking rules so much as I was for trying to enforce them without authority. Many children are scolded for fighting with their siblings. Just as often for me, I got in trouble at home for trying to be the third parent.

Whenever my sisters were undergoing some kind of consequence for misbehavior, I made sure that my parents followed through on their punishment to the fullest extent. For example, it seemed that my sister Michelle was perpetually losing her mobile phone privileges for sassing our parents. Each time, I reminded my mother or father on a daily basis how many days remained until Michelle could have her phone returned to her.

Sometimes Mom and Dad would relax the punishment earlier than expected, which made me angry. They backed out on day three of what was supposed to be a week for Michelle without her phone (I imagine this was for good behavior on Michelle's part, but I, of course, never noticed that). In these cases, I would try to take matters into my own hands and snatch the phone away from Michelle as soon as she got it back. Soon after, I would be the one facing consequences.

I have been a rule follower, and a rule enforcer, my entire life. As an adult and a teacher, the only rule-enforcing I do now is with my students, but rules and perfectionism continue to play a significant role in how I make decisions. One of the reasons I was attracted to printmaking is because it is rule-based making: create an image on paper or the computer, transfer each layer to a matrix, etch the plate according to series of steps, determine press

pressure, register the paper, print, and repeat. With this method, at least early in my printmaking career, I took comfort in knowing that I was operating within the rules.

During my first year of graduate school, it became clear to me that operating within the safety of printmaking rules did not complement the work that I had started to make using non-traditional fine art media. Well-registered, four-color etchings perfectly centered within a two-inch border of white BFK Rives paper seemed out of place when displayed next to my artwork on drywall with its rough and heavy cuts. I would need to deviate from how I had been taught to make prints and suppress my inner rule enforcer.

In most studio art courses in higher education, students are encouraged to keep a sketchbook in which they are supposed to draw daily and complete preparatory sketches before starting a final artwork. There is validity to this process, especially for cultivating discipline in beginning-level courses. It is one approach. Another approach, and one that I find aligns better with my desire to be as physically engaged with my work as possible, is to keep a “sketchbook” of collected objects, maintain a library of rubbings, scans, and photographs of interesting textures and surfaces I encounter in my environments, and build compositions as I make prints rather than executing an already-resolved image from a preliminary drawing.

The entrepreneur Paul Graham, writing from the perspective of a computer programmer, addresses a similar personal discovery in his book *Hackers and Painters*:

I was taught in college that one ought to figure out a program completely on paper before even going near a computer. I found that I did not program this way. I found that I liked to program sitting in front of a computer, not a piece of paper. Worse still, instead of patiently writing out a complete program and assuring myself it was correct, I tended to just spew out code that was hopelessly broken, and gradually beat it into shape. As far as I can tell, the way they taught me to program in college was all

wrong. You should figure out programs as you're writing them, just as writers and painters and architects do.¹¹

Like Graham discovered in his programming practice, breaking rules and going against the grain of established methods of solving problems can yield productivity and discovery. Through my growth as a printmaker over the last three years, I have become more comfortable figuring out my compositions as I print them. I use monoprinting processes to make unique prints rather than editions, work with parts of matrices through the use of stenciling, and print on found, torn, and translucent paper or textiles rather than rectangular sheets of fresh printmaking paper. The resulting prints are unified with the artwork I have made outside of the print studio, too: one-of-a-kind, fragmented, and heavily-layered.

If I could go back and talk to my childhood self, I would say the same thing that my parents told me each time I tried to extend my sisters' punishments, "AJ, you're not the parent. It is not your job to enforce the rules." I tell myself the same thing today in the studio. While I am the creator of the work I make, this does not mean that I need to be its parent. It is not my job to enforce the rules of artmaking. It is my job to question the rules and learn when and how to break them.

Dieter Roth

Dieter Roth "broke" the rules of printmaking early in his career as an artist.¹² In part by studying Roth's work, I have gained confidence that an experimental approach to printmaking is a valid one and can yield a prolific career.

¹¹ Paul Graham, *Hackers & Painters: Big Ideas from the Computer Age* (Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly, 2004), 21–22.

¹² From 1947, when Roth was 17 years old, until his death in 1998, Roth made over 500 graphic works, many of which are unique prints. Dirk Dobke, *Dieter Roth: Graphic Works* (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2003), 7.

Rule	Alternative
Print editions	Create unique prints (monoprints and monotypes)

By age twenty-two, Roth created monoprints based on chance and deliberate arrangements of the matrices. One such print was a woodcut from 1952 titled *Exlibris Franz*, which show the abstracted letters F, R, A, N, and Z in various arrangements on the paper (Figure 3.1). This work would set the stage for his future practice in monoprints and experimental printmaking. For much of his career, Roth created one-offs by shifting, alternating or combining the matrices, or by altering colors.



Figure 3.1. Dieter Roth, *Exlibris Franz*, 1952, woodcut, 12 x 8 in.

Rule	Alternative
Complete print in fewest layers	Print more than necessary

In the early 1990s, Roth made a series of prints, some editioned and some monoprints, where he combined many unrelated lithography stones printed in various colors. In 1992, he created *Kombinationsdruck* (“Combination Print”), a fusion of five intaglio plates printed in black. Each plate had previously been a stand-alone image for its own edition of prints (Figure 3.2).

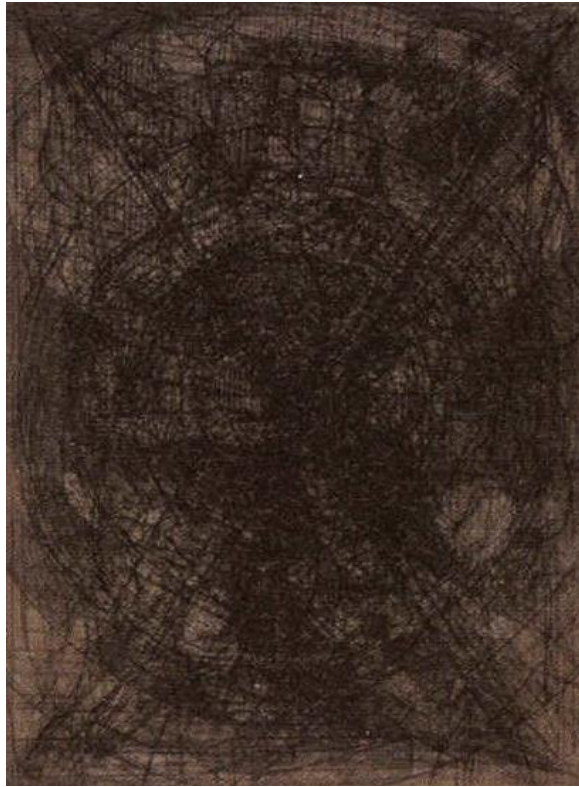


Figure 3.2. Dieter Roth, *Kombinationsdruck* (“Combination Print”), 1992, drypoint, 12 x 9 in.

Rule	Alternative
Print with specially formulated etching or lithography inks	Print with food

In his *Containers* portfolio, among others, Roth investigated the possibilities of “material graphics” by first pulling a blind proof using little or no ink on the printing matrix, and then overprinting it with a second run with a variety of “unartistic” materials such as chocolates, other sweets, eggs, and biscuits (Figure 3.3). His later works included pressings of an entire chocolate box, a salami slice, soft cheese, fruit and vegetable juices, and curdled milk.¹³



Figure 3.3. Dieter Roth, *Cash (exhaust)* from *Containers* portfolio, 1972, etching with chocolate squashing, 23 x 19 in., Museum of Modern Art.

¹³ Ibid., 15–16.

Rule	Alternative
Print with thin, transparent layers of ink so that subsequent layers respond to early layers	Work with thick, opaque layers

In a series of screen prints on postcards titled *6 Piccadillies*, Roth pushed the limits of the medium by printing over and over to produce, in at least one case, “a layer of ink several millimeters thick” (Figure 3.4).¹⁴



Figure 3.4. Dieter Roth, untitled from *6 Piccadillies*, 1969–1970, double-sided screenprint-over-offset lithograph from a portfolio of six double-sided screenprint-over-offset lithographs, 20 x 28 in., Museum of Modern Art.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17.

Rule	Alternative
Print lightest to darkest colors	Print dark to light, and obscure previous layers with impasto

In *Postcard* from 1969, Roth worked over a photographic image that had been printed in black with white and green impasto paste, obliterating much of the photograph and leaving a maze-like pattern of lines that stand out from the surface (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.5. Dieter Roth, *Postcard*, 1969, paint and vinyl adhesive on Mylar, 25 x 37 in.

Rule	Alternative
Print on clean, white, archival paper	“Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing” ¹⁵

Decomposition was an important part of Roth’s work. As in the prints with food, Roth often combined materials that were sure to rot, mold, and decay with traditional print media. Sometimes he would attempt to control the process of decomposition by sealing the works in plastic sleeves.¹⁶



Figure 3.6. Dieter Roth, *Thomkinspatent*, 1968, screenprint and vegetable juice on cardstock in plastic cover, 28 x 40 in., Museum of Modern Art.

¹⁵ Roth wrote this on one of his artist’s books titled *Snow* as a direct reminder to future custodians that his chosen materials would change over time. This phrase later became the title of a 2013 exhibition of Roth’s work at the Museum of Modern Art. Sarah Suzuki et al., *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013). Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 13–June 24, 2013.

¹⁶ Dobke, *Dieter Roth*, 17.

Rule	Alternative
Maintain tight registration with clean, uniform borders	Redirect perfectionistic tendencies towards energy for experimentation

As Sarah Suzuki writes in *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing*, a book about Roth's printmaking work, "Rather than obsessing over the minutia of fine craftsmanship, [Roth] used his accumulated knowledge to subvert perfection, technical accomplishment, and beauty."¹⁷ This mindset seemingly allowed Roth to give himself permission to try some of his boldest experiments, including the food "pressings" (flattened by vertical pressure) and "squashings" (flattened by horizontal pressure).



Figure 3.7. Dieter Roth, *Grosser Sonnenuntergang* ("Big Sunset"), 1968, sausage on cardstock in plastic cover, 37 x 26 in., Museum of Modern Art.

¹⁷ Suzuki et al., *Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing*, 21.

Rule	Alternative
Use wood, metal, or stones specifically intended for printmaking matrices	Ask oneself, what else can be a matrix?

Roth's earliest prints were drypoints made from flattened tin cans.¹⁸ In the fall of 2018, I attended a panel discussion at the joint conference of the Friends of Dard Hunter and the American Printing History Association that further explored the idea of alternative matrices. The presenting artists, including Orit Hofshi, Daniel Heyman, Vanessa Nieto, and Laura Post, spoke about boards and plates of various materials, paper, the human body, castings, and digital files as viable matrices. In her artist statement, Post is explicit about her desire to rethink the traditional notion of a printmaking matrix. Rather than existing only as a vehicle to carry an image, Post writes that "the matrix itself provides a framework to think through ideas; breaking them apart and creatively reconstituting them."¹⁹ For example, in *Collapse*, Post uses the faces of her family members as matrices to form paper that had been previously printed using relief and intaglio techniques (Figure 3.8). These "life casts," as Post refers to them, allow her to create stronger bonds with the individuals who are most significant in her life.²⁰

¹⁸ Dobke, *Dieter Roth*, 17.

¹⁹ "About Laura R. Post," in *Laura Post*, <http://lrpstudio.com/about/> (accessed April 3, 2019).

²⁰ *Ibid.*



Figure 3.8. Laura Post, *Collapse*, 2016, paper with woodblock print and engraving, 18 x 15 x 10 in.

Break the Printmaking Rules

Not surprisingly, when I began making prints, I followed the “rules.” To be clear, there are no official rules dictating the creation of fine art prints, but there are some best practices that are recognized among a majority of printmakers. These are the rules that are generally taught in beginning-level printmaking courses, including: print editions (sets of identical prints); complete the print efficiently, in as few layers as possible; print with specially formulated relief, intaglio, or lithography inks; print lightest to darkest colors; print on white, archival paper; maintain tight registration with clean, uniform borders; use well-tested materials for matrices: carve on wood for relief, etch copper or zinc for intaglio, and draw on limestone for lithography.

While these guidelines comprise a sound approach to making prints, they leave little room for improvisation. Most of the decisions that impact the final image are made before the printer approached the press. In my work, I find that there is underexplored potential in collaborating with the press. Rather than being the tool for reproduction of an already-established idea, I engage the press early in the printmaking process as a conceptual tool to help create the idea. The press is the stage in which all of the actors come together for an improvisation performance. It is a call and response approach instead of a factory assembly line.

Although I did not recognize it as such then, I began breaking the printmaking rules in my first semester of graduate school by using found matrices with monoprint and monotype techniques. After printing an edition of a woodcut featuring soybean roots and aerial views of farm fields, an image that reflected my time as a farmhand in Minnesota, I sought to shift the meaning of the image by creating varied backgrounds. I used monotypes

of solid colors rolled onto large acrylic sheets and monoprints of wood scraps from the College of Design's laser-cutters and CNC routers.

It is important to note the distinction between monoprint and monotype, which are sometimes used interchangeably. A monoprint is a unique print created from a matrix that has the capacity to be editionable, such as a carved wood block or etched copper plate. A monotype is a unique print created from non-editionable matrix, such as the smooth surface of an acrylic sheet or an uncarved wooden surface. The image on a monotype matrix is removed after the impression is made.

The found matrices were rich in that they offered a variety of shapes, sizes, and textures that I could harness for printing. Some held repeated patterns of detailed shapes that had been cut to assemble architectural models, like the leftover dough after a cookie cutter has done its work. Other scraps were curvilinear forms like a large S that had been routed from three-quarter-inch birch plywood.

I began the printing process by gathering my kit of parts; the acrylic sheets and wood scraps, a dozen sheets of paper, and brayers and rollers of various sizes. Also at the ready were stations of premixed colors including yellow, green, orange, light blue, as well as blends of each. First, I printed a single layer on each of the twelve sheets alternating between flat colors and blend rolls from acrylic sheets and patterns from the wood scraps. Without letting the ink dry, I immediately printed another run using a new color and matrix per print. For example, if the first layer was a flat color or blend of color, its next layer was an impression from a wood scrap and vice versa. By the end of this printing session I had a total of twenty-four runs and the beginnings of some promising backgrounds for my monoprints.

The next printing session is where I engaged the press as a performance stage. With the soybean woodcut, ink stations, and the background prints ready, I began a printmaking dance. I selected a background print at random and set it next to the soybean woodcut on the press bed. I imagined how the two might pair, roughly assessing how the textures of the woodcut would complement the patterns of the background print, and how the colors of the latter would visually emphasize or suppress areas of the former. I selectively inked the soybean woodcut based on my assessment, aligned the paper to the woodcut, and made the impression.



Figure 3.9. Andrew Zandt, *Replenish*, 2016, relief and monotype, 24 x 18 in.



Figure 3.10. Andrew Zandt. *Revitalize*, 2016, relief and monotype, 24 x 18 in.

The results were exciting (Figures 3.9 and 3.10). Not every combination yielded a beautiful print, but I finished that printing session with at least six monoprints of which I was proud. These six were varied in color and texture and solicited different readings of the original soybean woodcut; a couple were energized and chaotic, which complemented the tangle of roots, while the others were quieter, reflecting the peace I often felt while standing alone in a sea of crops.

I am not sure that I would have achieved the same range of results had I meticulously planned each combination of the soybean woodcut and background print. This particular

printing session left me feeling more confident that improvisation at the press could be meaningful, productive, and surprising in the best possible sense.

Three semesters later, while taking my first course in lithography, I learned about color trial proofing. Printmakers typically use this process to experiment with various color combinations and find one that they will ultimately use for their edition of prints. I was not interested in creating an edition, but this process was great for generating variations. Once again, the press became a performance stage. I prepared all of my materials, including four distinct lithographic plates, a variety of stencils that corresponded to the shapes on the plates, and thirty-two sheets of paper.

Over many printing sessions, I printed each plate onto all of the paper. I worked in sets of four; the first print was of the plate without stencils, and the second, third, and fourth prints used one or more stencils. After every four prints, I introduced a new color so that I had used eight colors by the time I reached the end of my stack of paper. In the subsequent printing session, I shuffled the order of the prints so that each would be as varied as possible and include at least some visual element from each of the four lithographic plates.

As I neared the end of this process and the prints became saturated, my movements were less rhythmic and more calculated. My decisions about where to put the stencil, for example, happened at the press just before I aligned the paper to the plate and were based on the particularities of each print. When I was done, I laid out all thirty-two prints. The result of what was meant to be a preliminary was actually a visual representation of improvisation, play, and documented evolution of thoughts and ideas (Figure 3.11).



Figure 3.11. Andrew Zandt, selected untitled works from a series of 32 monoprints, 2018, lithography and collagraph, 8 x 5 inches each.

CHAPTER 4. DEVELOP QUICK AND INELEGANT SOLUTIONS

Repurposing Materials

In the spring semester of 2018, I participated in a course on weaving and digital fabrication. Half of the course was about using fabrication tools such as CNC routers and 3D printers to build components for and assemble looms, and half was about learning how to weave. Although I didn't expect it at the beginning of the semester, our limits in terms of time, knowledge, and money presented challenges that helped clarify my making process as an artist. How does one build a loom that otherwise costs hundreds, or thousands, of dollars for nearly nothing? The class hacked towards a solution. For example, at one point my team needed gears to create a ratcheting mechanism to hold warp threads in constant tension on the loom. Ratchet straps have gears, they are available off-the-shelf at most hardware stores, and they are inexpensive, so we repurposed them for our loom.



Figure 4.1. Ratchet strap gears repurposed for the back beam of a weaving loom.

The confidence and ability to define one's own process and make the necessary tools along the way can significantly expand an artist's practice. Artists are not limited to commonly manufactured paper sizes, readily available mark-making materials, and best practices. They make their own paper, drawing tools, and methods. They do this, however rough and inelegant it may be, because this process ignites new discoveries along the way. Early in graduate school I asked myself, "what other surfaces and materials hold an image?" This question prompted my work with drywall panels and found printmaking matrices. I now ask, "how can I hack my process and tools to create something unexpected?" Part of the answer involves unconventional materials as well as harnessing play as a methodology.

Phyllida Barlow

In interviews, the artist Phyllida Barlow often speaks about her engagement with maker's tools and materials. In one interview, Barlow writes "Familiarity with materials is something I enjoy, and I keep returning to materials that I have a longstanding love and quite often hate for."²¹ She goes on to explain that things get lost through not remembering and inaccurate drawings; they change through this process and start to become something else. If works change, break, or even get destroyed, that is all the starting point for something new.²²

Two works that were included in an exhibition of Barlow's work at the Des Moines Art Center in 2013 illustrate her process of material transformations. *Untitled:screestage* is a large sculpture that occupied much of the central space of the Art Center's upper I.M. Pei Gallery (Figure 4.2).²³ The work is a conglomerate of plywood and timbers resting on a

²¹ Fisher, "Unidentified Foreign Objects," 98.

²² Ibid., 100.

²³ "Phyllida Barlow: Scree," in *Des Moines Art Center*, <https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/pbarlow-scree>, last updated 2013 (accessed December 14, 2018).

beveled steel armature. One end meets the ground, almost inviting a viewer to step up and walk to the elevated rear part of the stage that nearly reaches the ceiling of the gallery space. The panels are painted with bright, saturated hues—red, yellow, and orange panels are mixed with teal, green, and violet. Interrupting the sheets of plywood are vertical timbers covered with scrim and concrete. If the plywood were floating in the sea, these timbers would be the poles of a long-abandoned pier. The sense of decay is challenged by bright paint, a majority of which are warm colors. Physically, the piece has massive weight, but its upward thrust tricks the viewer into believing that the whole installation could take off in flight if it were not confined within the gallery space.



Figure 4.2. Phyllida Barlow, *untitled:screestage*, 2013, Steel armature, timber, plywood, scrim, cement, polyurethane foam, PVA, paint.

Another large-scale installation from the same exhibition, *untitled: 11awnings*, features eleven wedges of steel, polyurethane board and foam, cement, and scrim mounted to the wall and allowed to protrude into the gallery space (Figure 4.3). The cantilevers are draped with large sheets of colored fabric. These sheets are layered upon and overlap one another. In some cases, as many as a dozen sheets hang from each structure. The eleven awnings could easily provide shelter for eleven resting bodies, although their varied hanging heights would make it difficult for tall individuals to stand upright. Like *untitled: screestage*, the structure of the awning seems ominous as if it were borrowed from a dystopian world. This mood is offset by the vibrant colors of the fabrics.



Figure 4.3. Phyllida Barlow, *untitled: 11awnings*, 2013, steel armature, polyurethane board, polyurethane foam, cement, scrim, fabric.

Tarps

The implication of shelter in both of Barlow's installations, as well as others by the artist, is what originally prompted my exploration of tarp forms. My work ranged from four by four feet to nine by twelve feet. The substrates were inexpensive paper and plastic painting drop cloths that I purchased from a local hardware store. I pinned three eight by four-foot sheets of bubble wrap insulation (intended as insulation for water heaters) to the wall and painted each with a different color latex house paint and several layers of roofing tar. I then pressed the drop cloths against the painted insulation wrap to transfer the paint to the cloth. I repeated this process many times to the point that the paper layer of the drop cloths became so saturated with paint that it separated from its plastic backing and stuck to the paint on the insulation wrap.

The resulting pieces were dense, distressed fabrics, opaque in some areas where the tar and paint adhered to the cloths, and transparent where the paper peeled away (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). When lit from above and viewed from its underside, the cloths became devices for filtering light.



Figure 4.4. Andrew Zandt, *Tar-palling I*, 2017, latex paint and tar on plastic, 4 x 4 ft., installation at Design on Main studios and gallery, Ames, IA.

As I created the works, I was interested in an excerpt I had read from an interview with Barlow about thoughtless gestures. Although the process of making was more physical than intellectual, Barlow observes that whatever one does or makes, the artist is going to end up thinking about it. “By the time you’re actually doing that ‘thoughtless’ gesture,” as Barlow explains, “you’ve been round the houses to get yourself prepared to do it.”²⁴

My tarp-making process required a significant amount of planning and thought. I had to make decisions regarding the type of materials to use, their physical properties like size, texture, durability or vulnerabilities, as well as factors like cost and portability. I had to prepare the materials and a site within my studio that was suitable for what ended up being a very messy process. Even while making the tarps, I had to make decisions about how much paint to apply to the surface of the tarps, how hard to press to make the paint transfer to the

²⁴ Fisher, “Unidentified Foreign Objects,” 107.

fabric, the order of the colors, and so on. The preparatory work is a powerful impetus for thinking about what I was about to make.

This procedure has a kinship with the idea of hacking. Implicit with my intent to break something apart and to seek unauthorized or unsupported alternatives is the idea of not knowing or being able to expect exactly what will result from the process. The uncertainty is an important stimulus for making. It requires the maker to set up the conditions for something to happen, but it does not dictate the final output. It is an ongoing process of make, observe, respond, make, observe, respond.

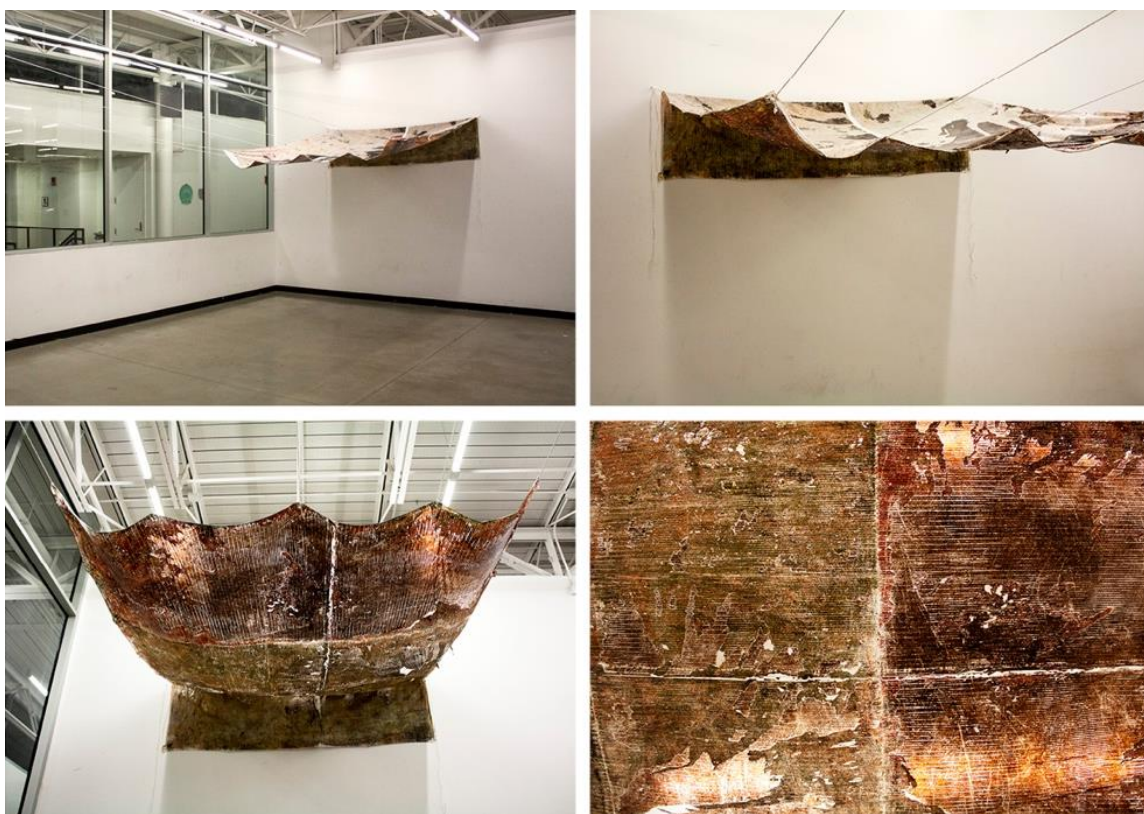


Figure 4.5. Andrew Zandt, *Tar-palling III*, 2017, latex paint and tar on plastic, 12 x 9 ft., installation at King Pavilion, College of Design, Ames, IA.

CHAPTER 5. GAIN FREEDOM FROM THE ESTABLISHED WAY

Making Jeans: The Beginning

In 2013, when most of my weekdays were spent in front of a computer screen for my day job, I was compelled to build something that I could hold in my hand. I needed new jeans and was tired of relying on the brands, styles, and fits that were available at the local shopping mall. With limited knowledge of sewing, let alone how to construct jeans, I decided I could hack my way through making my own. I did some preliminary research, but after a while, as so often happens with lofty ideas and limited time and know-how, I put the project on hold. It would be another five years before I actually put needle to denim.

In the interim, I maintained interest by reading the stories of American-made denim companies and following online a number of small businesses and independent denim makers across the country who were handcrafting jeans one garment at a time. With each discovery of another company or maker, I marveled at the craft involved in the jean-making process, from drafting the patterns and sourcing the raw denim, to sewing and applying the rivets. My desire to complete this project grew threefold through my research. It was no longer only about building something; it was in part a desire to learn a new skill, part quest for super-locally-made products, and part challenge to see if I could do it.

My interest in the project renewed after I completed the course on digital fabrication and weaving. Learning a variety of weaving techniques in this course enhanced my appreciation of denim as a woven textile. Shortly after the course finished, I began my first attempt at making jeans knowing that it would be about more than just making my own clothes.

Three Printmakers: Daniel Brice, Dirk De Bruycker, and Rob Swainston

Daniel Brice (born 1961) is a California-based artist who has worked at the Tamarind Institute of Lithography in New Mexico on several occasions to create multiple series of prints. I am interested in the contrast between hard and soft edges in Brice's prints, which has been an aspect I consider often in my own work (Figure 5.1). The hard edges appear as structure that support the loose washes, like reinforcement-bar in wet concrete. In this sense, the structure exists below the surface of the image. The hard edges can also be read as existing above the washes, which is best represented by the translucent runs of white rectangles. This play of layering activates the compositions, requiring the viewer to re-examine any initial assumptions about the order in which the colors were printed.



Figure 5.1. Daniel Brice, *Untitled*, 2015, monotype with watercolor, 23 x 18 in.

Brice's process of making prints is significant. In his artist statement, he explains: "My escape in this world comes through the act of music making...a collaborative activity. These pieces are at their core an extension of the act of making somewhat organized sound."²⁵ Making music, especially collaboratively, is about being present in an experience with one's instrument and the other musicians. The result is a one-of-a-kind live performance. Brice connects his prints to his music through the monoprinting process, and the unique prints take on additional meaning as documentation of his live performances at the press. My takeaway from this is the question of how my prints can evolve through a process, rather than begin with a predetermined image?

Dirk De Bruycker (1955–2015) was a New Mexico-based painter who also made lithographs and monotypes. De Bruycker's prints are based on photographs by the artist of patterns projected onto nude bodies. The photographs were printed lithographically, and the artist responded with "stained areas and drawn patterns."²⁶ His combination of photo-based and hand-drawn imagery has been influential for my work.

²⁵ "Daniel Brice," in *Tamarind Institute of Lithography*, <http://tamarind.unm.edu/artists/view/261-daniel-brice> (accessed March 3, 2018).

²⁶ "Dirk De Bruycker," in *Tamarind Institute of Lithography*, <http://tamarind.unm.edu/artists/view/61-dirk-de-bruycker> (accessed March 3, 2018).



Figure 5.2. Dirk De Bruycker, *Mort Bleu IV*, 2005, lithograph, 15 x 10.5 in.

De Bruycker was interested in exploring the unknown through unexpected pairings of subjects, forms, and shapes. He takes advantage of awkward combinations (ink spills and the figure, for example) to generate a jarring, but ultimately fresh, view of mundane subjects (Figure 5.2). I wonder to what degree improvisation also played a role in the De Bruycker's process. In a 2014 interview, he described his general approach to his work as "largely intuitive and allow[ing] for a measure of chance, persuaded to an extent. It is in essence a process of response and fine-tuning."²⁷ This has been my recent approach to making prints; they have evolved through a process of make, observe, respond, make, observe, respond.

²⁷ Brenda Hope Zappitell, "Interview with Dirk De Bruycker," in *Professional Artist Magazine*, <https://professionalartistmag.com/interview-dirk-de-bruycker> (accessed April 3, 2019).

Of these three contemporary printmakers, the New York-based artist Rob Swainston (born 1970) is the most explicit about hacking as part of his process. In his artist statement, he writes, “Artists are image makers showing an image constructed, built, repeated, overprinted, coded, decoded, and endlessly negotiated. For the printmaker, the press bed is not a window of illusion, it is the space of social tinkering. The artist is a hacker.”²⁸

Swainston’s direct acknowledgement of hacking as a part of his printmaking process is supported by a sense of rule-breaking. For example, *Working Proof 3* has at least three layers of printed information: a collagraph layer of rich black ink went down first, followed by two layers of lithography, one printed in a tint of blue and the final layer in opaque white (Figure 5.3). Most areas of this third layer are opaque enough to cover the blue and black layers below, but in other areas the white fades away to become a thin veil of ink. It is interesting here that the first layer is the darkest value, as if Swainston was working backwards. This is one way to hack printmaking, to break the unwritten rule that (usually) one prints from lightest value to darkest.

²⁸ “Artist Statement,” in *Rob Swainston*, <http://www.robswainston.com/artist-statement-and-bio> (accessed January 25, 2019).



Figure 5.3. Rob Swainston, *Working Proof 03*, 2012, collagraph and lithograph, 37 x 25 in.

Overprinting can obscure information, which may sometimes be an unfortunate accident, but this can also be a good thing. For example, in *Working Proof 12*, the yellow, red, blue, and black layers paired with the photographic images in the upper right corner would have been equally dominant for attention (Figure 5.4). By adding a final layer in white that was partially stenciled, Swainston allowed some of the previous layers to show through while also refocusing the viewer's attention on the photographic layer.



Figure 5.4. Rob Swainston, *Working Proof 12*, 2012, woodblock, silkscreen, and inkjet, 37 x 25 in.

Body, Surface, Skin, and Textile

While I was making jeans, each stage of the process resonated with me, and although I did not realize it right away, it had implications for my artwork. For example, as I was drafting the pattern for the garment, I kept thinking about its relationship to drafting in architecture. The pattern is a plan, like a floor plan, but it has a more direct relationship to the human body. The lines represent a human's curvature and also direct the construction of the garment. I became interested in this relationship between body and line, as well as the pattern as a schematic and its function as a diagram.

As part of my research for making clothing, I had a lot of sewing patterns and pieces of jeans that I had deconstructed from already-made garments to understand how the pockets, waistband, fly, yoke, and front and back legs came together. I photographed and scanned the patterns and pieces and brought these images together through paper and digital collages, which I then transferred to lithographic stones and plates.

This body of prints has been an important marker in the development of my thesis work. It has helped me align subject matter—body, surface, skin, and textile—and has helped me better understand my preferred working process (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). When I started the series, I had a general idea of how they would look, but there were many decisions that had to be made along the way. The prints evolved through periods of intensive studio work, an interim week of observing and responding, followed by more sessions of rigorous production.

Despite my interest in hacking as a productive process, I began the fall 2018 telling myself that I needed to reign in what felt like an out-of-control printmaking process. I had a studio visit early that fall in which the visiting artist asked, “What are your rules for making prints, and how could you stretch the rules without breaking them?” The next day, I made prints following rules.

The printing session was successful in that I abided by the rules and finished the day with nine prints, but I certainly did not stretch any of the rules. Frustrated, I asked myself why I was trying to make more rules for myself. I am a rule follower every day and have been my entire life. Perhaps I needed to do away with the rules, not follow or even stretch them, but break them altogether, especially if I am thinking about hacking!

I returned to the series of prints I made after the studio visit. With a new resolve to break the rules, I picked up a print and quite literally broke it by tearing it lengthwise into three pieces. I tore the other prints in a similar way and shuffled the pieces to create new compositions. This made me rethink how I would continue printing on the new compositions, and my priorities for each in terms of controlling hues and values to create emphasis. I initially thought I would only reshuffle the pieces once, but I actually reshuffled after each printing session.

It got to the point, however, where I felt like I was forcing connections that were not really there. Instead of shuffling the pieces again, I matched them with their original counterparts. I found this to be really exciting; the compositions were varied while still retaining connection points from the first layers of ink and along the congruent torn edges (Figure 5.7). It was as if the individual torn pieces had gone out into the world, had wildly different experiences, successes, and tragedies, and reunited to share their stories.

This struck me as a powerful metaphor for how one navigates life. Fragments of experiences and memories are shuffled and recalled, sometimes incorrectly, and they are often accompanied by physical evidence on the body through age marks, skin wrinkles, and scars. These marks are often considered undesirable, but there is something quite beautiful about them as affirmations of experiences. I find a similar beauty in buildings that have had a long history. There is often residue from past configurations and programs, like two different brick colors on an old industrial building where one can clearly make out the shape of the window or door that had been covered.

Through these prints, I sought to expand the relationship between the human body and surface specifically through the lens of skin and textile. I did this by collaging, or

hacking together, fragments of these subjects. Skin could mean images of actual human skin or expanded to include paper or clothing as a skin-like surface. I also like the idea that the sewing patterns can be just as much of a representation of the human body as literal photographs of it.

As a whole, these works aligned with my adapted definitions of hacking: they involved rough and heavy cuts through collage; I broke the rules by printing on non-archival materials like sewing patterns and reversing the typical approach to layering color; when I tore the prints, I took advantage of an inelegant solution to stimulate their progress; and finally, I did not predetermine their outcome by creating a sketch, transferring the image to a matrix, and creating an edition of prints. Instead, these monoprints evolved through my preferred working process: make, observe, respond, make, observe, respond.



Figure 5.5. Andrew Zandt, *Yoke*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 12.5 x 8.5 in.



Figure 5.6. Andrew Zandt, *Sinews*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 14.5 x 9.5 in.

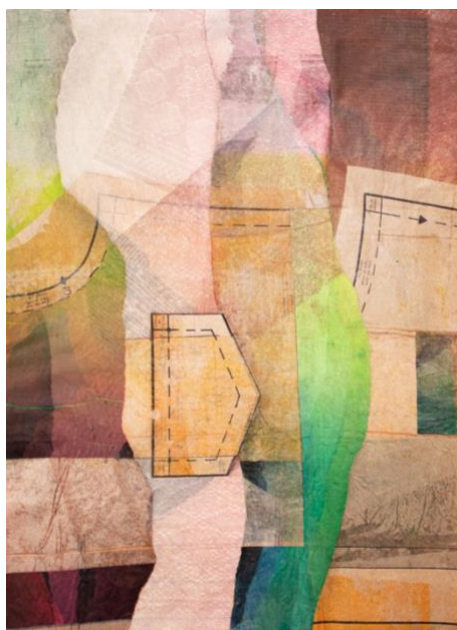


Figure 5.7. Andrew Zandt, *Ease*, 2018, lithograph, monotype, and collaged paper, 24 x 26 in.

CHAPTER 6. MOVING FORWARD

Leading vs. Living a Life

In his book *Lines: A Brief History*, anthropologist Tim Ingold distinguishes between human-generated threads, surfaces, and traces. A thread is a three-dimensional filament that has a surface (at least at a microscopic level) but is not drawn onto surfaces. From his perspective, threads are inherently human; although there are some animals who use threads, “for the most part,” he writes, “the making of threads is a human specialty.”²⁹

When threads are woven together, surfaces are created in the form of textiles. Building a textile is just one way in which humans create surfaces. We also lay floors, raise walls, and construct roofs to create our built environments. These surfaces conceal and protect, as do textiles that become blankets and clothing. While surfaces keep us comfortable and safe through covering, they also have the capacity to reveal. A well-loved baby’s quilt, a faded pair of jeans, a scuffed floor, or a repaired brick wall share their history.

Some of that history is shown through marks on the surface, or traces. Ingold sees traces as any enduring marks left in or on a solid surface. They might be, intentionally or not, drawn additively, such as a line with ink, or reductively, like scratches, scores, etchings, and engravings. Even the most natural of human surfaces, our skin, takes on traces as it changes with time. It has a story to tell. The visual narrative of wrinkles, blemishes, calluses, tattoos, and scars of aged skin recount one’s experiences and memories. They might describe a proud career of physical labor, resilience after traumatic events or illnesses, or the individual’s expressiveness as a youth in the case of a tattoo. These surfaces that collect the marks of wear communicate what it means to be human.

²⁹ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 42.

In another of his books, *Life of Lines*, Ingold writes about humanness as a quality that evolves over the course of one's life. "To human," Ingold writes, "is a verb."³⁰ Being human requires ongoing engagement and participation. It is a process of actively leading, rather than passively living, a life. The surfaces that surround us take on the evidence of leading a life, and they share the story of its evolution with others through visual marks. In order to lead a life, humans must continue to make surfaces and pay attention to them as they change.

Gallery Exhibition

My thesis exhibition, *Time, Action, Wear, Memory*, was displayed at Gallery 181 in the College of Design at Iowa State University from April 1 through April 5, 2019 (Figures 6.1 and 6.2; also see appendix, page 76). There were sixteen artworks in the exhibit, including seven framed prints that I had completed in the summer and fall of 2018 and nine unframed prints that I developed early in 2019 specifically for the exhibition. The framed and unframed pieces comingled on the gallery walls; I was intentional about not segregating the images so that viewers could more easily make connections between skin, which was most evident in the framed works, and clothing that was apparent in the unframed prints.

³⁰ Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 115.



Figure 6.1. Andrew Zandt, *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (north and east walls), 2019.



Figure 6.2. Andrew Zandt, *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (south and west walls), 2019.

I included the works from 2018 because they guided the development of the more recent pieces. Whenever I felt stuck about how to move the latest prints forward, I went back to my approach in the earlier works. For example, at one point the latter ones were too monotonous; they needed moments of visual surprise (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). When I created the earlier prints, such as *Interface* and *Center Back Seam*, I exchanged pieces among all of them so that they each had at least two parts that were not original to the print (Figures 6.5 and 6.6). Without realizing it, I found that I had not been doing this with the new collages, and as soon as I revisited them with renewed effort to mix the fragments, the works improved.

The nine most recent prints in the exhibition are made of paper and fabric pieces that I tore or cut with a knife, shuffled, printed again, reassembled, and machine-sewed into place. The fragments overlap one another in a way that references patches on worn clothing, alluding to a sense of heavy repair. In some works, the lines and shapes of the printed images connect from one fragment to another, as seen in *Waistline* (Figure 6.7). In others, such as *Collar*, lines and shapes are interrupted by the layering (Figure 6.8).

Unlike their predecessors, the latest prints are unframed and attached to the gallery walls with white, glass-head sewing pins. The pins puncture triangular tabs of linen that are applied to the back of the pieces. The shapes of the linen tabs echo the triangular sewing notches that appear throughout the works. Without the protective barrier of Plexiglas, these unframed works are sympathetic to the movement of viewers; as they pass by the prints, the air currents gently lift the paper away from the wall and cause the loose threads to flutter.



Figure 6.3. Andrew Zandt, *Untitled (work in progress)*, 2019, monotype, fabric, thread, collage, approx. 24 x 24 in.



Figure 6.4. Andrew Zandt, *Untitled (work in progress)*, 2019, monotype, thread, pencil, approx. 24 x 12 in.



Figure 6.5. Andrew Zandt, *Interface*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 14.5 x 9.5 in.



Figure 6.6. Andrew Zandt, *Center Back Seam*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 9 x 9 in



Figure 6.7. Andrew Zandt, *Waistline* (detail).



Figure 6.8. Andrew Zandt, *Collar* (detail).

Each unframed print references the shape of one or more sewing patterns, although it is difficult to determine exactly what role the patterns would play if they were to be made into clothing. Gentle curves on the perimeters of some pieces, such as *Seam*, suggest neckbands or armholes (Figure 6.9). On others, like *Pocket*, continuous but slightly angled edges allude to the taper of a pant leg, sleeve, or skirt (Figure 6.10). Among the hard pattern edges are the jagged teeth of torn paper. At first glance, these appear to be sharp peaks and valleys until one gets close enough to detect the long, soft fibers that are characteristic of Asian-style paper (Figure 6.11).

In two prints, *Waistline* and *Staystitch*, fabric replaces paper fragments. In *Waistline*, the fabric is off-white and clean, offering a contrast to the overprinted paper pieces (Figure 6.12). The fabric of *Staystitch* is dark red with the exception of staccato bleach stains that echo the lace-like pattern of the garment that is the subject of the work (Figure 6.13).



Figure 6.9. Andrew Zandt, *Seam*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 29 x 12 in.



Figure 6.10. Andrew Zandt, *Pocket*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 28 x 14 in.



Figure 6.11. Andrew Zandt, *Hip Curve* (detail).



Figure 6.12. Andrew Zandt, *Waistline*, 2019, monotype, fabric, thread, 44 x 16 in.



Figure 6.13. Andrew Zandt, *Staystitch*, 2019, monotype, fabric, thread, 45.5 x 17 in.

The shaped pieces have a different impact than the framed, rectangular works. They exude figure and physicality, granting them a more direct relationship to the human body. The curved edges allow for an easier understanding of how these pieces might be positioned on and fit the body than the ninety-degree angles of the framed works. They reference clothing, and I delighted in one visitor's remark that *Staystitch* was about her size and that she would love to wear it as part of a dress. I also received numerous requests from visitors to touch the works so that they could better understand their layers and construction. I was happy that the works solicited an urge to touch as it elevated their role as physical artifacts of a manual, corporeal method of making.

As a whole, the exhibition was the result of my latest efforts to appreciate human-generated surfaces as they relate to body and clothing. This has renewed my interest in the role of surface as a boundary. These works are a form of barrier that capture, like a fine mesh or filter, the actions of daily human life. The actions themselves permeate the paper, and the evidence of the experience is registered—or printed—onto the paper's surface. The images left behind are proof of living.

When I think about my role as a printmaker, the idea of boundary continues to be relevant. On one hand, I consider myself to be an outsider among traditional printmakers who primarily engage time-honored printing techniques. In this sense, I am hacking my way into printmaking as a method of making art. On the other hand, I am already an established printmaker who looks to break out from within the world of printmaking. From this position, I am a hacker who breaks the “rules” of the medium to expand the possibilities of what might be considered a print.

In fact, I am an artist who enjoys breaking in and out of printmaking. I cross its boundaries, back and forth, not unlike the way actions cross the threshold of my paper. The prints register actions, and they also record my oscillating relationship to the medium. At this point, I have engaged monotype, monoprint, collage, and mixed media as a way to start this process of entering and leaving the realm of printmaking. There is plenty of room to expand the ways in which I challenge the notion of its boundaries. Perhaps I limit my role in the printing process and invite chance to play a more prominent part. For example, I could bury a work underground for one year and allow natural processes of decay to be the printmaker. Such methods would move away from the idea of an artist in front of a press, but it still embraces one of the fundamental characteristics of the medium: the transfer of visual information from one surface to another.

As I look forward to making art after graduation, I will look back to the prints in this exhibition for the clarity they gave me in regard to my working process. The foundation of this process lies in knowing that the prints will only be partially complete when I leave the printmaking studio. This is actually a great relief; not only does it take away some of the pressure to “get it right” while printing, but it extends my time with the prints through cutting, collaging, and sewing (and even more processes in the future, like burying), and it grants me more of an opportunity to evolve the work.

The prints in this exhibition will continue to develop. As anyone who has encountered a ripped seam on their clothing knows, sewing is not a permanent method of joinery. The threads that hold the fragments together will be cut, the pieces reprinted and reshuffled, and sewn again. Like clothing, I will proceed with mending the works, not because they have to be fixed, but because it is an important part of keeping them alive.

Conclusion

California-based artist Allison Miller is best known for her large-scale, multi-layered paintings. She begins these works by developing one composition and gradually layers new ones on top of the original so that the result is a palimpsest-like visual narrative. While working at the Tamarind Institute of Lithography in 2013, she approached her prints with a similar process.

One print in particular, titled *Boy*, reveals her working process well. *Boy* is an eleven-color lithograph of stacked patterns, textures, and washes (Figure 6.14). At the bottom is a pastel-colored cluster of shapes that resemble a network of neurons. Above are two layers of manufactured patterns, which could be wallpaper torn from an early twentieth-century house. A zig-zag pattern of black stripes joins the wallpaper to a gestural wash of a shaded-red hue.



Figure 6.14. Allison Miller, *Boy*, 2013, 11-color lithograph, 30 x 22 in.

The cascade of spontaneous visual elements in *Boy* is difficult to place into a larger context or narrative. Odd pairings—patterns versus texture, rigid versus soft marks, visual cues versus the work’s title—seem to be a theme. One critic, in a review of a 2016 solo show of Miller’s paintings, noted, “[Miller’s] are gorgeous paintings assembled in a jarring manner, different from the ways we are accustomed to encountering beauty.”³¹

I have been interested in creating images that challenge traditional views of beauty. While there might be attractive moments in my work, especially though my use of prismatic colors, I rely on unusual color pairings, actions like cutting, tearing, and scratching, and materials such as tar that are typically associated with wear, decay, and repair rather than beauty. My process has been similar to Miller’s in that I engage multiple, heavily-worked layers, often finding my images through repetitive actions rather than transferring them from sketch to final piece. I discover new meaning while this happens, but sometimes I have wondered if it is the best approach. In a review of a 2013 show of Miller’s paintings, a critic wrote:

Individually, Miller’s paintings indulge the popular notion that “ham-fisted” composition is compelling content and exploit self-conscious incoherence; collectively, they reveal a steadfast commitment to shifting narrative and serendipitous discovery. As Miller moves forward, I wonder if this will continue to be enough.³²

Is controlled play or hacking one’s way towards solutions enough of a concept to drive one’s work? I think it is clear that this process can be incredibly productive, as demonstrated by my artwork and the work of all of the artists referenced in this thesis.

³¹ Daniel Gerwin, “Clunky Beauty — Allison Miller at The Pit,” in *BLARB*, <http://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/events/clunky-beauty-allison-miller-pit>, last updated December 16, 2016 (accessed March 26, 2018).

³² Sharon Butler, “Allison Miller’s Dirty Paintings and Clumsy Relationships,” in *Two Coats of Paint*, <http://www.twocoatsofpaint.com/2013/09/allison-millers-dirty-paintings-and.html>, last updated September 22, 2013 (accessed March 13, 2018).

When asked about what keeps her motivated to produce work, Phyllida Barlow explains that the popular idea of art is that it raises questions. Barlow, however, is more interested in creating work that provides answers to unknown questions.³³ Unlike scientific inquiry, the questions an artist deals with may not need to be fully developed. An equally valid approach is to just begin making, playing, and responding to arrive at an answer. This is a hands-on process that began for me in architecture school and one that will continue to evolve throughout my career as an artist. New questions will always develop along the way, and I will respond to them through subsequent bodies of work.

³³ Fisher, "Unidentified Foreign Objects," 98.

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APPENDIX A. *TIME, ACTION, WEAR, MEMORY* EXHIBITION



Figure A.1. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (north and east walls), 2019.



Figure A.2. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (north wall), 2019.



Figure A.3. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (northeast corner), 2019.

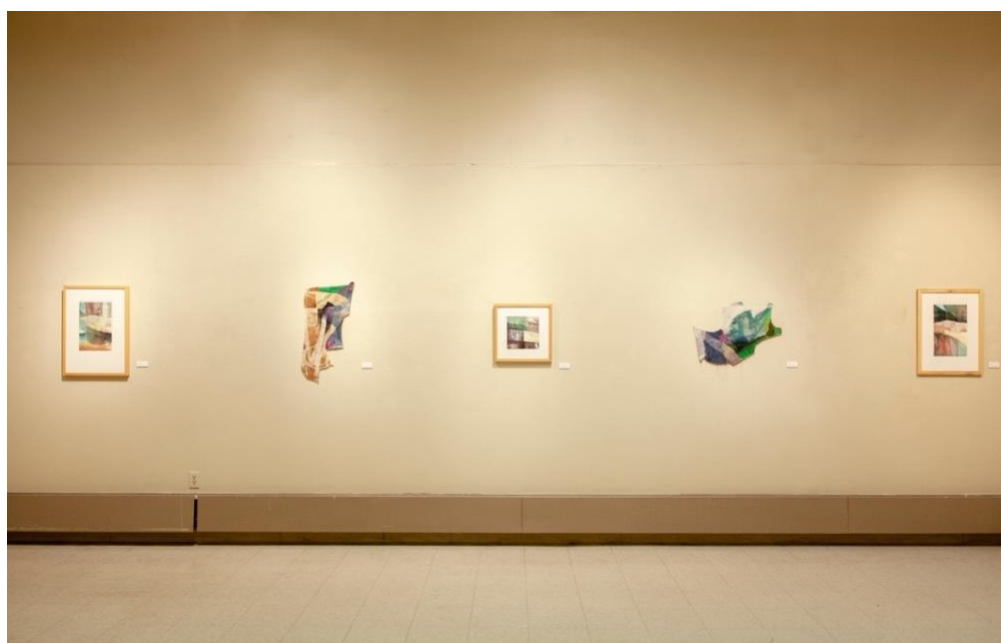


Figure A.4. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (east wall), 2019.



Figure A.5. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (southeast corner), 2019.



Figure A.6. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (south wall), 2019.



Figure A.7. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (southwest corner), 2019.



Figure A.8. *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* installation view (west wall), 2019.



Figure A.9. *Yoke*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 12.5 x 8.5 in.



Figure A.10. *Blouse Back*, 2019, monotype, lithograph, pencil, thread, 24 x 11 in.



Figure A.1. *Waistline*, 2019, monotype, fabric, thread, 44 x 16 in.



Figure A.2. *Interface*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 14.5 x 9.5 in.



Figure A.3. *Pocket*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 28 x 14 in.



Figure A.4. *Center Back Seam*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 9 x 9 in.



Figure A.5. *Neckline*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 18 x 24 in.



Figure A.6. *Sinews*, 2018, collaged lithographs and thread, 14.5 x 9.5 in.



Figure A.7. *Sleeve*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 16 x 25 in.



Figure A.8. *Collar*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 26 x 12 in.



Figure A.9. *Staystitch*, 2019, monotype, fabric, thread, 45.5 x 17 in.



Figure A.10. *Hip Curve*, 2019, monotype, lithograph, pencil, thread, 26.5 x 18 in.



Figure A.11. *Seam*, 2019, monotype, pencil, thread, 29 x 12 in.

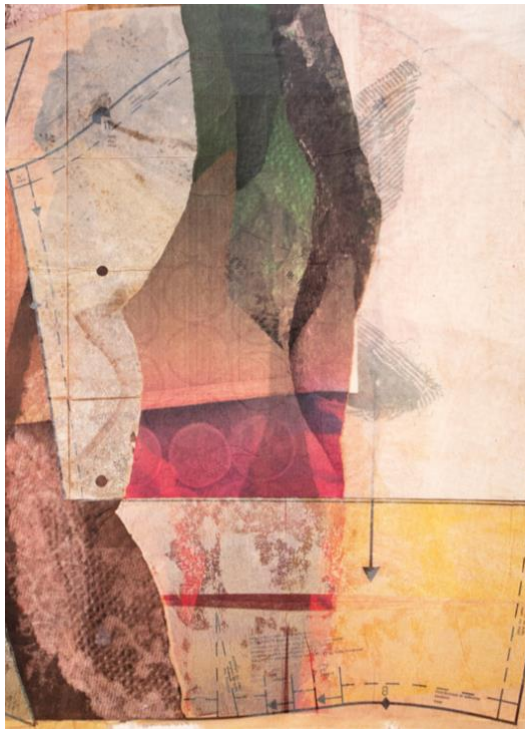


Figure A.12. *Ease*, 2018, monotype, lithograph, pencil, collage, thread, 24.5 x 17.5 in.

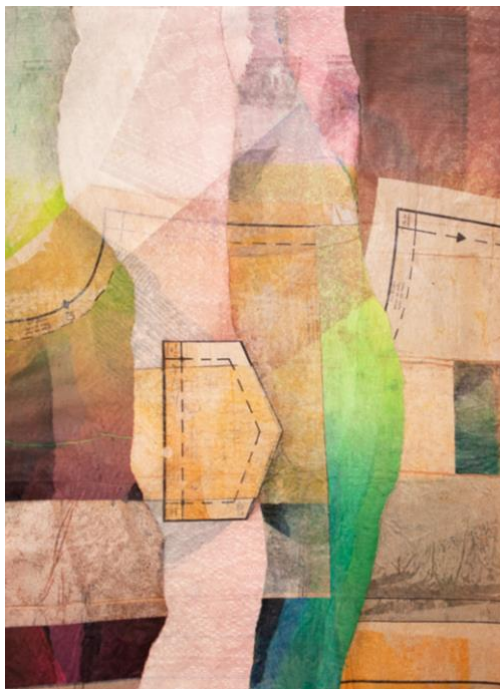


Figure A.13. *5/8" Seam*, 2018, monotype, lithograph, pencil, collage, thread, 23.5 x 17.5 in.



Figure A.14. *Cut 2*, 2018, monotype, lithograph, pencil, collage, fabric, thread, 23 x 17 in.

APPENDIX B. *TIME, ACTION, WEAR, MEMORY* ARTIST STATEMENT

Artists are hackers. The essence of hacking is to deviate from an established way of thinking or doing something. To be an artist requires one to break rules. I further embrace the nature of hacking by starting with quick and inelegant solutions to solve complex problems and making rough and heavy cuts into ineffective ideas. The work in *Time, Action, Wear, Memory* began after I made a pair of jeans from scratch. I was tired of buying pants that somewhat fit, and I could not afford the highest-quality jeans. Instead, I reconsidered my usual process of acquiring clothing, which is to rely on mass-manufactured garments sold in shopping malls.

Each step of making the jeans impacted my future artwork: I gained a more intimate understanding of the human body's proportions by drafting the pattern; I understood the value of cutting apart something beautiful (a new roll of tightly-woven raw denim) to create something even better; and I learned how to join unwieldy material through sewing. Moreover, I gained an appreciation for the surface qualities of the garment and the skin it was about to cover. At that point, the jeans (and my twenty-nine-year-old skin) were fresh. In a few years, the pants will be covered with fade marks, tears, holes, stray threads, and the outlines of my wallet and iPhone on the pockets.

In *Time, Action, Wear, Memory*, I am seeking to expand the relationship between the human body and surface through the lens of skin and clothing. Varied combinations of pressure-printed fabrics and photolithographs of human skin yield unique identities for each print, much like an individual's fingerprint. Each work is comprised of paper fragments that are stitched together, and the overall shapes of the prints resemble sewing patterns. This exhibition embodies the unpredictability of a working process I refer to as "make, observe,

and respond.” I begin each print without knowing or being able to expect the final results. Uncertainty is an important stimulus for making. It requires the maker to set up the conditions for something to happen, but it does not dictate the final output.

Despite my interest in hacking as a productive process, I have struggled with whether or not its lack of rules qualifies it as a *legitimate* process. On the other hand, I have been a rule follower my entire life, and I recognize that my time at the printing press is a place to break rules. To that end, I tear my prints after the first layers are established. I follow the tears with shuffling, reassembling, and reprinting before sewing the pieces together. The reunification of the printed fragments is a powerful moment. It is as if the individual pieces had gone out into the world, had wildly different experiences, successes, and tragedies, and then came together to share their stories.

This is a metaphor for how one navigates life. Fragments of experiences and memories are shuffled and recalled, sometimes incorrectly, and they are often accompanied by physical evidence on the body through age marks, skin wrinkles, and scars. These marks might be considered undesirable, but there is beauty in them as affirmations of living. I find a similar beauty in the markings of worn jeans and even historical buildings. That history is made visible through the residue of past configurations and programs, such as two different brick colors on an old industrial warehouse where one can clearly make out the shape of the window or door that had been covered. The traces of hacking are all around us.